

DPC Newsletter

Volume 3, Issue 3
March 2005

Commission's Executive Director to Retire

After a long and distinguished career in resource management and environmental planning, the Delta Protection Commission's Executive Director, **Margit Aramburu**, has announced that she plans to retire from State service at the end of June 2005.

Ms Aramburu was interviewed for her position, and selected by the Commission to serve as its first Executive Director, at a public meeting in May 1993. She has aptly and conscientiously served the Commission as its Executive Director ever since, and will be stepping down after more than twelve years in this capacity. Before she was hired as the Commission's Executive Director, she worked in the Bay Area at a private consulting firm and at the San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission. She is a California native who currently splits her time between Elk Grove during the week and her retirement home in Aptos.

The Commission will be generating and circulating an announcement that it is seeking a new Executive Director, and will again hold interviews to select Ms Aramburu's replacement. The Commission will most likely set up a subcommittee to handle the hiring and interviewing process at its meeting on March 26, 2005, with a notice for the position being circulated in early April. Any interested applicants may also go to the Commission's website, www.delta.ca.gov, as the announcement will be posted there, as well. It is anticipated that the Commission will select its new Executive Director after interviewing all of the candidates for the position at its public meeting on May 26, 2005.

Ms Aramburu indicates that she will be available to assist the new Executive Director and the Commission during this transition.

Ms Aramburu has been an incredible asset to the Delta community and to this Commission, for the twelve years she has served as its Executive Director. Her hard work, enthusiasm, and contributions to the improvement of the Delta and its resources have helped raise awareness in numerous forums on important Delta issues.

It is with great fondness and heartfelt gratitude that the Commission and its staff recognize the incredible impact Ms Aramburu has had on the advancement of Delta issues and knowledge. We wish her a long and happy retirement, filled with exciting adventures in her travels around the world and plenty of free time to enjoy her family.

Mark Your Calendars!

- **Delta Protection Commission** Thursday, March 24, 2005, 6:30 p.m.
- **DPC Recreation Citizens Advisory Committee** Wednesday, April 6, 2005, 1-3 p.m. , and
Wednesday, May 4, 2005, 1-3 p.m.

Unless noted otherwise, all meetings are held at the Jean Harvie Community Center in Walnut Grove. Please call (916) 776-2290 if you need directions.

Legislation of Potential Interest to the Commission

The Legislature reconvened on January 3, 2005 to kick off the first year of the 2005-2006 Legislative session. Bills for consideration during this first year were submitted by February 18, and must be passed by September 9, 2005, in order for the Governor to consider taking action on them. The Governor must sign or veto any bills by October 9, 2005.

The Commission will receive information on a number of bills of potential interest in 2005:

AB 797: Wolk: DELTA PROTECTION COMMISSION — This bill proposes to delete the provision that the chair and vice chair may be re-elected, instead requiring that the positions be rotated each two-year term.

AB 1200: Laird: SACTO-SAN JOAQUIN DELTA — This bill would require DWR and DFG to submit written findings to the Legislature and Governor, no later than June 30, 2005, on the potential impacts subsidence, earthquakes, floods, and climate change may have on water supplies derived from the Delta.

AB 1296: Hancock: S.F. BAY AREA WATER TRAIL This bill would require the State Coastal Conservancy to lead a collaborative partnership to establish a plan for the San Francisco Bay Water Trail, linking access to the San Francisco and San Pablo Bays and the Delta, and providing for diverse water-accessible overnight accommodations.

SB 200: Machado: DELTA CONSERVANCY PROGRAM This bill would establish the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Conservancy Program, to be administered by the State Coastal Conservancy, to undertake projects in the Delta, and create a Delta Conservancy Program Account in the State Coastal Conservancy Fund for administration and implementation of the program. It would also require that the six legislators appointed to participate on the Coastal Conservancy to balance representation among coastal California, the San Francisco Bay Area, and the Delta.

SB 866: Kehoe: WATER USE MEASUREMENT INFO — This bill would require DWR, no later than two years after completing each update of the California Water Plan, to submit a written report to the Legislature regarding water use measurement information. It would also require DWR to develop and implement the use of a coordinated water use reporting database, to be made available over the Internet. The bill as currently drafted calls out agricultural water suppliers to report aggregated farm-gate delivery to DWR, and persons diverting surface water for agricultural use to measure and report those diversions to DWR, using the standard forms.

No Money for Levees in Proposed Federal CALFED Funding

Included in President Bush's proposed budget for fiscal year 2006, which was unveiled in early February, is \$77 million for CALFED-related programs. The \$77 million, if ultimately approved, would be a substantial increase from the \$58.2 million approved for CALFED-related activities in fiscal year 2005.

The proposed budget for 2006 includes:

- \$11 million for water storage feasibility studies;
- \$10 million for the Environmental Water Account;
- \$14 million for water use efficiency actions; and

- \$26 million for ecosystem restoration activities (including funds from the Central Valley Project Improvement Act's Restoration Fund).

AB 2828, passed by Congress last year, authorized the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to spend up to \$90 million over the next five years to improve Delta levees. Unfortunately, no funding was actually allocated under that bill; the actual funding was to be allocated under the annual federal budget bills. To date, no proposed funding for Delta levees programs administered by the Corps has been included in the President's proposed budget.

The Bay-Delta Authority and its Bay-Delta Public Advisory Committee will consider budget and other program issues at its joint meeting to be held April 13 and 14, at the Sheraton Grand Hotel in Sacramento.

Changes to Commission Officers and Membership

At the Commission's meeting on January 27, 2005, the Commission unanimously elected Yolo County Supervisor **Mike McGowan** as its new Chairman, replacing former Commissioner and Chairman Patrick N. McCarty. Mr. McCarty, who represented Central Delta reclamation districts on the Commission, retired from the Commission at the end of 2004 after serving as its Chairman for ten years. The Commission's Vice Chairman **Bob Ferguson**, who represents South Delta reclamation districts, was unanimously re-elected to his position.

Michael Scriven was elected by Central Delta reclamation districts in 2004 to replace Mr. McCarty as its representative on the Commission. Mr. Scriven was sworn in to office at his first Commission meeting in January.

New Solano County Supervisor **Michael Reagan**, the replacement for former Supervisor Ruth Forney, also attended and was sworn in to office at the Commission's January 2005 meeting.

Contra Costa County Supervisor **Mary Piepho** was appointed to serve as the Board of Supervisor's representative on the Commission. Ms. Piepho was unable to attend the Commission's January meeting, but she will be sworn in to office soon.

City of Antioch Councilmember **Arne Simonsen** was appointed by the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) to represent ABAG on the Commission. Mr. Simonsen, who received his appointment at ABAG's January 20, 2005 meeting, replaces former Mayor of Rio Vista Marci Coglianesse on the Commission. Mr. Simonsen will be sworn in at the Commission's March 24, 2005 meeting.

Finally, Lodi Mayor **John Beckman** was appointed by the San Joaquin Council of Governments (SJCOG), at its January 27, 2005 meeting, to represent SJCOG on the Commission. Mr. Beckman replaces Lathrop City Councilmember Augie Beltran, who recently resigned his seat on the Commission. Mr. Beckman will also be sworn in at the Commission's March meeting.

Update on Revision of Background Reports

Now that Commission staff has completed the update of its Delta Recreation Facilities Inventory, and work is underway on a Delta Recreation Master Plan, staff is now in the process of updating the Commission's background report on Marine Patrol, Boater Safety, and Education.

Staff has been contacting the Sheriff's Departments of all five counties, the Coast Guard station at Rio Vista, Dept. of Boating and Waterways, and others to discuss Marine Patrol divisions' staffing levels, budgets, and main problem areas or issues of concern in the Delta. This information will be used to update the background report, which was completed back in 1995.

The objective of this exercise, and the updating of all the Commission's other background reports, is to determine whether the policies and findings the Commission has included in its Regional Land Use Plan for the Primary Zone of the Delta are still relevant. The policies and findings in the Plan were generated in the early- to mid-1990s in light of the information obtained when writing the background reports which were the basis for the Plan.

Staff anticipates an updated draft of the Marine Patrol, Boater Safety, and Education background report will be nearing completion by late March of 2005. The draft background report will be reviewed and commented on by the Commission's Recreation Citizens Advisory Committee (RCAC) at its meeting on April 6, 2005, and RCAC will review a final draft of the document at its May 4, 2005 meeting.

The original background report from 1995 is currently posted on the Commission's website, www.delta.ca.gov, so that any interested parties may comment on it. The revised draft of the background report will also likely be posted on the Commission's website in early April 2005.

Explore the Delta in Spring!

Spring has officially returned to the Delta, and the longer, warmer days offer more opportunities than ever to explore the natural areas and historic towns of the Delta!

Need some ideas for short, relaxing day trips?

- The Delta's pear trees are in full blossom, but it won't last long! Take your bicycle or car for a ride along scenic Highway 160 in Sacramento County; you'll see these beautiful blossoms between Freeport and Walnut Grove, especially in the Courtland area, but only for a few weeks, so hurry!
- Take a walking tour of historic Delta towns. The Walnut Grove Chamber of Commerce circulates brochures to visitors interested in exploring the towns of Walnut Grove and Locke. Visitors may also see firsthand how some of these towns are undergoing revitalization, including providing access to the towns to boaters with new community docks along their waterfront areas. (The City of Isleton just completed construction of its beautiful new public dock earlier this year.)
- Explore Delta sloughs by canoe or kayak. The Dept. of Parks and Recreation is offering guided canoe tours of the Delta Meadows area; the fee is \$15. Also, the Cosumnes Preserve and Delta Meadows areas are great places to launch your own canoe or kayak, and there is no day use or launch fee.
- Celebrate Delta asparagus season by visiting the City of Stockton's annual Asparagus Festival, scheduled for Friday, April 22 through Sunday, April 24. Like last year, the festival will be held along the City's renovated waterfront area, and will feature great food, music, vendors, and activities for the whole family!